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A LIBRARY GUIDE
FOR AG ECON 430
WORLD FOOD AGRICULTURE

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Recorded knowledge quadruples every five years. It is essential that you know how to find, evaluate, and use the best of that knowledge. Much of the information you need is organized and disseminated by the library. Your research will always begin with a library search. This search may expose you to the existing critical and evaluative literature, or it may provide you with material for developing your own original analysis.

This guide is designed to introduce you to specific tools and techniques available in The Ohio State University Libraries, particularly the Agriculture Library. If you use these tools and techniques in an organized way, your time in the library will be well spent and have lasting benefits.

Conducting a Library Search

To state the obvious, research begins with an idea or subject. To determine if your idea has merit or if you will find it interesting, consult an overview in a dictionary, encyclopedia, yearbook, handbook, or almanac.

Encyclopedias are useful for finding introductory or background information and for directing you to additional sources. Specialized dictionaries will help you clarify any unfamiliar terms and some have material very similar to encyclopedias. Brief overviews with condensed statistics are common features of yearbooks, handbooks, and almanacs.

The following is a list of some of the most useful basic sources:

Agricultural Law. KF1681A8H37
A Chinese/English Dictionary of China's Rural Economy. HB61B7
Encyclopedia of Banking and Finance. HG151M961973
Encyclopedia of Education. LB15E47
Encyclopedia of Energy. TJ163.2M3
Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. H41E561937
Encyclopedia of the Third World. HC59.7K87
Europa Yearbook. D2E8921978
International Encyclopedia of Statistics. HA17I63
Marketing Terms. HF5415S51951973
A Modern Dictionary of Sociology. HM17T5
Statistical Dictionary of Terms and Symbols. HA17K81939a
World Almanac. AY67N5W9
World Bank Glossary. HG1601W92

These sources may contain confusing initialisms or acronyms. Use these titles to determine their meaning:

Acronyms, Initialisms. PE1693G31976
 Acronyms Relating to International Development. JX1995C27

The next step in your search strategy is to perform a subject search of the library's collection to determine what books and journals are available on your topic. In this search it is important to use the Library of Congress Subject Headings: the large, red, two-volume set located near the card catalogs and computer terminals. The LCHS is a standardized list of words and phrases used to describe the subjects of books and journals in our system. These words and phrases are referred to as terms and appear in bold type. Under each term three symbols may appear which you need to be familiar with: sa, x, and xx. SA, "see also," means that you can also use this term(s); x, "x-rated," means the attached term is a synonym for the word in bold type but is NOT used; and xx, "expanded," means the attached is broader in meaning than the one in bold type.

Sometimes, the term you want to use will be a term used by LCHS--such as FOOD SUPPLY for topics about food production. Other times the term you want to use will not be in LCHS--THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES is not an approved term; you will need to look for terms such as UNDERDEVELOPED AREAS. Topics can also be subdivided, for instance, AGRICULTURE--THAILAND, or AGRICULTURE--TROPICS.

After you have found a few titles and carefully noted the complete call number (all the numbers and letters to the left of the title), use the on-line catalog, LCS, to determine the location and availability of the book. LCS lists every book and journal in the card catalog, but not exactly in the same way. For instance, there are no subject entries on LCS for books cataloged

for OSU before 1974. IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT YOU LEARN TO USE LCS. The card catalog has been "frozen" and no more cards will be filed into it, so the only way to find current material is to use the computer catalog. This guide will not instruct you in use of LCS. There are workshops and brochures describing its use. There is a large notebook on the circulation desk in the Agriculture Library with detailed instructions or you may ask a staff member for help.

For topics in the card catalog or LCS on agricultural economics, material is frequently under the term, AGRICULTURE--ECONOMIC ASPECTS, which is subdivided by country; for instance, AGRICULTURE--ECONOMIC ASPECTS--AFRICA. Also, search under the country name subdivided by the term ECONOMIC CONDITIONS or ECONOMIC POLICY; for example, BRAZIL--ECONOMIC CONDITIONS--1945. Additional subject headings can be found in the Library of Congress Subject Headings or at the bottom of the main entry.

Another important term to look for in the catalog is BIBLIOGRAPHY. Bibliographies contain listings of related publications. Sometimes they also briefly describe the articles or books. To locate a bibliography, look for the subject subdivided by the word BIBLIOGRAPHY in the card catalog. For example, AGRICULTURE--ECONOMIC ASPECTS--BRAZIL--BIBLIOGRAPHY. Hundreds of bibliographies exist. A few of the more important ones in agricultural economics are listed below:

Commodity Futures Trading. Z7164C83W69
 East Asian Economics. Z7165A743L43
 Farming Systems of Africa. Z5075A4L38
 A Select Bibliography on Economic Development. Z7164E15P68
 A Survey of Agricultural Economics Literature. Z5074E3S9

The above should provide a list of books, reprints, business reports, government documents and older journal articles pertinent to the subject you

have selected. However, many important journal articles and government documents, especially recent ones, will not be identified through the above sources. To locate this material (listed by author or subject of the article) you will need to use an index to the literature. A list of the most important ones in agricultural economics follows:

General and Inclusive

Bibliography of Agriculture. Z5071U513
 Biological and Agricultural Index. X5073A27
 PAIS Bulletin. Z716E2P9

Specific

Abstracts on Tropical Agriculture. S3T72
 Journal of Economic Literature. HB1J6
 World Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Abstracts. Z5074E3W6
 (called WAERSA)

Government

Agricultural Commodities Index. Z5074S76A4 (for older USDA series)
 Congressional Information Service (CIS) Index to Publications of the U.S.
 Congress. Z1223Z7C65 (REF)
 Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications. Z1223A18
 (up to 1980 in Agriculture Library)

Hopefully, you have found some citations that look good. If you have searched the catalog and examined the bibliographies and indexes but have found little information or found it all in foreign languages, give careful consideration to the feasibility of the project. You may have to redefine your topic in order to avoid a deadend. On the other hand, you may have found too much literature, especially for a class paper. It may be necessary to redefine the topic to make the research manageable. Whatever the reason, if you make significant changes in your topic, be sure to recheck the bibliographies and indexes for titles you have missed.

Besides surveying the literature, the researcher also generally faces the need for statistical support or even a statistical analysis. Thus, the researcher must locate relevant statistical sources. For agricultural economics, the following are frequently useful for finding statistics:

Guides and Indexes

American Statistics Index: User Guide--A Comprehensive Guide and Index to the Statistical Publications of the U.S. Government. Z7554U5A46 REF
 Predicast F & S Index. HG4905F84 COM
 Subject Index to Sources of Comparative International Statistics. Z7551P54
 Statistical Sources: A Subject Guide to Data. Z7551S81977
 Statistics America: Sources for Social, Economic and Market Research. 2nd ed. Z7554A5H37 1980

Here is a quick reference list to some basic U.S. statistical sources:

Agricultural Statistics. HD1751A61982
 Census of Agriculture
 Commodity Yearbook. HC14C731982
 County and City Data Book. HA202A36
 County Yearbook. JS41IN34
 Municipal Yearbook. S324A2I521978
 Ohio Agricultural Statistics. S10105
 A Sociological Almanac for the U.S. HN57G4
 Statistical Abstract of the U.S. HA202
 USDA Commodity Reports, i.e., Cattle, Cotton, and Wool

Major statistical sources with an international perspective include the following titles:

Demographic Yearbook. HA17D451981
 FAO Monthly Bulletin of Statistics. HD1411F82
 FAO Production Yearbook. HD1421F5851981
 FAO Trade Yearbook. HD9000.4F581977
 Foreign Agricultural Circulars of the USDA
 Foreign Agricultural Trade of the United States (FATUS). JD9004A3175
 International Financial Statistics. HG3881I626
 Main Economic Indicators. HC240A1065 REF
 Statistical Abstract of Latin America. HA935C31978 (v. 19) 1981 in Ref. Room
 Statistical Yearbook for Latin America. HC161U4821980
 U.N. Statistical Yearbook. HA12.5U631979-80

You will also want to be aware of the following organizations which publish proceedings, annual reports, staff papers, special series, etc.:

Asian Development Bank
 Environmental Fund (Washington, D.C.)
 European Communities
 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)
 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development--also called World Bank (IBRD)
 International Labor Office
 Federal Reserve Board (particularly its Bulletin HG2401A3)

Information about these and other organizations can be found in directories. These sources will give address and membership information as well as describe the activities of the organization. Some also mention titles of publication such as annual reports and newsletters.

Agricultural Research in Developing Countries. S540A2F661978
 A Business Guide to the Near East and North Africa. HF3760.8A7U531978
 A Directory and Bibliography on the Theme "Research and Human Need". XAGI1100467
 A Directory of Business and Financial Services. HF3010S741976
 Directory of Development Resources. HC60D53
 World of Learning. AS2W919797-80

In addition to including statistical support for your topic, you may also need basic geographic information on soils, climate, crops, livestock, etc. A few sources are listed here:

Atlas of the World Commodities. HF1025J6
 Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide
 World Atlas of Agriculture. GL046J1W6

Many class reports are also country specific. An important source for up-to-date general, as well as statistical, information on countries are bank and agricultural bank monthly and annual reports. The Agriculture Library contains bank reports for countries from all over the world. Many of these

reports are not cataloged and cannot be found in the catalog or LCS terminal. However, a listing of all bank reports can be found on the window ledge of the Arnold Alcove of the Agriculture Library. Uncataloged reports are shelved alphabetically by country in the Alcove; cataloged reports are shelved in the stacks.

In addition to the above bank reports, the Agriculture Library has about 50 newsletter titles on international development, agricultural development, ag credit, small scale industry and appropriate technology in file boxes located with the periodicals in Arnold Alcove.

Finally, the Agriculture Library has the Agricultural Credit and Technology Studies (ACTS) file, which is a unique collection of approximately 2200 journal articles, pamphlets, short published materials, published conference papers, bank reports, and similar materials on agricultural credit, capital, policy, and savings. This file is kept in seven file cabinets in Arnold Alcove. To locate an ACTS piece: (1) peruse the numerical listing of the ACTS Bibliography; (2) use the ACTS author card box; or (3) use the published AID/OSU abstract series called Agriculture Credit and Rural Savings (Z5074C7P34197-). There are six volumes and an author index.

Having completed the above steps, a fairly complete listing of useful, relevant and statistical sources should exist. The problem now becomes one of recording the important points or statistics of these references and statistical sources. That problem can best be handled by an annotated bibliography which is discussed in the next section.

Constructing an Annotated Bibliography

A time-saving step for keeping track of the various books, articles, and statistical works referred to is the annotated bibliography. This compilation

should contain the information needed to locate the work and construct footnotes and bibliographical citations. Thus, the call number, author, title, book, or journal published in (if an article), editors (if appropriate), publishing company, copyright year, volume number, and pages should be recorded. In addition, the main points of the work should be summarized in no more than one-third of a page. Such a condensation will force careful consideration of the article's or book's arguments while it is fresh in your mind. This consideration should, in turn, make writing the final report much easier.

To illustrate the information presented above, three examples of possible entries in an annotated bibliography follow.

A book:

HC106.6 G344 (Commerce Library)
Galbraith, John K., Economics and The Public Policy, The New American Library, Inc., 1973

Mr. Galbraith addresses the implications of concentrated economic power. Oligopolies and monopolies are able to use their economic power to influence consumer choices through advertising and political choices through "bureaucratic symbiosis." Thus, the consumer no longer solely decides the form of public policy. In addition, these firms, called planning system firms, do not maximize profits as suggested by neo-classical theory. Instead, they have sequential goals with protective (survival) goals being of first importance and affirmative (growth) goals being of secondary importance. The results of concentrated economic power are economic inefficiency and exploitation by the economically powerful of the economically powerless.

An article from a journal:

SIJ864 (Agriculture)
Working, Holbrook, "Theory of the Inverse Carrying Charge in Futures Markets," Journal of Farm Economics, Vol. 30, No. 1, February, 1948, pp. 1-28.

In this very important work, Mr. Working develops the concept of the price of storage. That is, that the price difference between two futures is the result of the amount of stocks being carried. If the

nearby futures is less than the distant futures, a surplus of stocks exist. If the opposite occurs, a shortage of stocks exist. Expectations on events that will occur between the two futures have little, if any, impact on this spread. These events determine the level of prices not the difference between futures prices. To explain inverse carrying charges (the second case above), the concept of convenience yield is introduced. This yield is a monetary yield from holding stocks, such as monetary losses avoided from not having to shut down the plant or monetary gains from expected price increases in the short run.

A statistical source:

HG2401A3 (Commerce and Main)
U.S., Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, U.S. Federal Reserve Bulletin, various issues, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971-1980.

The prime interest rate as of the 15th of March, June, September, and December was collected. If a range was quoted, the average was used.

As illustrated above, an annotated bibliography should serve three needs. First, it should allow easy location of the cited work (should the need arise). Secondly, it should allow easy construction of footnotes and bibliography. Lastly, it should speed the writing process.

Conclusion

This paper presents some of the tools and techniques for conducting a library search. While the discussion is mostly in terms of the Agriculture Library at The Ohio State University, it is applicable to other libraries and institutions. In addition, by presenting the tools within a search strategy, the guide provides order to what seemed a disordered process. Finally, construction of an annotated bibliography is discussed. This tool will help organize the material read or consulted and speed development of the final report.